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To the Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 349, An Act Concerning the Penalty for Possession of a Small Amount of Marijuana.

On December 1, 2006 my twenty year old nephew died of a drug overdose. His death has devastated my sister, her daughters and my entire extended family. He was a beautiful person and gifted individual, and to see his life cut short has left scars on all of us that knew him and loved him.

While the cause of my nephew's death was directly the result of a heroin overdose, the factors leading up to it are complex. However, one factor that my family and I all agree on is that my nephew's problems began not with heroin, but with other so-called 'recreational drugs' such as marijuana.

State Senator Toni Boucher's written testimony opposing SB 349, an excerpt of which I have included below, is spot on in its assertion that marijuana is a gateway for other drugs. My family has witnessed this personally, and for this reason I strongly oppose SB 349

Sincerely,
William J. Coupe
Wilton, CT

I became aware of the detrimental impact of marijuana use several years ago after a very emotional and tearful appeal from a mother and father who had found their talented son dead from a drug overdose at home in his bed. Marijuana is a gateway for other drugs, and it was cited by his parents as the real killer of their son. This personal appeal and countless others is the reason I advocate so strongly against the effort to decriminalize marijuana.